

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

Item No	Item
1.	<p>Chair’s Business:</p> <p>a) Attendance and Apologies</p> <p>Present: Mr K Webb (Principal/CEO), Mr J Nugent (Chair of the Governing Body), Mr J Mackell, Mr A Corbett, Mr S Pollard Items 4-12 only, Mr A McCrum, Mr D Stewart, Mr D Wilson, Dr D McConnell, Ms M Corrigan, Mr G Hetherington, Mrs D O’Hare, Mr S Hagen, Mr M McQuillan Items 4-12 only, Ms G Diamond, Mr M Huddleston and Mrs K Fraser</p> <p>In Attendance: Mrs H McKee (Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support (the “Director of SPQ&S”), Dr M Malone (Director of Curriculum & Information Services (the “Director of C&IS”), Mrs C Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mrs J Walsh (Marketing Manager) Items 1-4 only, Mr S Rankin (Head of Higher Education) Items 6-9 only</p> <p>Apologies: None</p> <p>In the Chair: Mr Hetherington Items 1-4, Mr Pollard Items 4-12</p> <p>Mr Hetherington was asked to Chair in the meeting until Mr. Pollard arrived. Due to the conflict at agenda 1F the Secretary advised that the Vice Chair, Mrs O’Hare, should not Chair the meeting in this instance.</p> <p>b) Declarations of Conflict of Interest</p> <p>The Chair invited members to declare any known or perceived conflicts of interests. Ms Corrigan advised that she has a potential conflict with regards to any discussions around CCEA as she is a Board member and is an employee at CCMS. Mr Hetherington advised as an employee of Ulster University he may be conflicted in any discussions around the University.</p> <p>c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20th June 2022</p>

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

The Chair invited members to review the minutes from the previous meeting. The Committee agreed the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Agreed: That the Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20th June and that the minutes be tabled for approval at the next meeting of the Governing Body.

Proposer: Deborah O’Hare

Seconder: Danny McConnell

d) Committee Terms of Reference annual review

The Committee reviewed the terms of reference and agreed no amendments were required.

Agreed: The committee reviewed and approved the Terms of Reference and recommended them for adoption to the Governing Body

Proposer: Alan McCrum

Seconder: Majella Corrigan

e) Committee Cycle of business

The committee agreed the work plan for the year and noted that it remains fluid and can be adapted to include urgent business at any time.

Action: The Committee agreed the Cycle of Business for 2022/23

Proposer: Deborah O’Hare

Seconder: Majella Corrigan

f) Committee Chair position

Mr Hetherington informed members that the Secretary had received an expression of interest from Mrs O’Hare in the role of committee chair, he reminded members that the agreed Standing Orders state that it is the role of the committee to elect a chair from its members. Given no other expressions were received Mr Hetherington therefore proposed to elect Mrs O’Hare as the Committee Chair.

Agreed: The committee elected Mrs O’Hare to the role of Chair

Proposer: Gareth Hetherington

Seconder: John Mackell

2. Matters Arising:

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

	Members noted there were no actions from the previous meeting.
3.	<p>Correspondence:</p> <p>Nothing to note.</p>
4.	<p>Marketing Update</p> <p>The Marketing Manager presented an overview of the marketing teams’ role, marketing activity in 2021/22 and the plans for 2022/23, the following points were noted in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Hetherington thanked the Marketing Manager for the informative presentation and added that the Governing Body are conscious the team has a lot to do in terms of building the brand with limited resources. He enquired if the College works with Sector colleagues to build a collective brand. • The Marketing Manger advised that she is part of a monthly sector group, and they meet to identify specific areas in which they can work collectively to raise the sector brand. She highlighted that there is also a PR agency employed for the sector. • In response to a query from the GB Chair the Marketing Manager advised that communication is regularly issued to schools and the open reads is monitored via dot mailer. Some schools do request presentations on the back of this and the team are constantly building relationships with schools. • The Principal highlighted that the real value of the advertising expenditure is much less than it was previously as the budget has been reduced and the costs are increasing. • Mr Hetherington thanked the Marketing Manager for her presentation and noted the Governing Body appreciates the efforts of the team especially in difficult financial circumstances. <p><i>Mr Pollard and Mr McQuillan joined the meeting during this item.</i></p> <p><i>From this juncture Mr Pollard Chaired the meeting.</i></p>
5.	<p>Project Based Learning and Transversal Skills</p> <p>The Director of C&IS presented an overview of how PBL ad T-Skills work alongside the curriculum, the benefits to students and how it is assessed. Members were invited to ask questions and the following points were highlighted in discussion:</p>

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a query around the retention of students the Director advised that in using PBL and T-Skills students are more likely to remain on their course, particularly during the first two weeks of term when the enterprise fortnight is held. He added that the bonding that takes place in these two weeks within each cohort is critical to retention rates. • The Director noted that not only the friendships that are formed are important socially, but they help students to settle into their course in that initial 2–3-week period, he added that the buzz that students have after their presentation is incredible and very rewarding for staff. • In response to a query from the committee if the enterprise fortnight is compulsory the Director confirmed that it is timetabled for all students, the evidence has proven that a lot is gained in these first weeks that will improve over time and ultimately become skills that can be built into the student’s way of life. • Mr Mackell enquired if there was scope to use this as a unique selling point for the College, the Director advised that it is written into the prospectus and vox pops with students speaking of their experiences have been promoted on social media, he noted that there needs to be a buy in from students and parents. • Mrs O’Hare commented how strong this piece of work is, she noted the concept of experiential learning is to be welcomed and the pastoral piece in terms of induction is invaluable.
6.	<p>Key policy updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Widening Access & Participation- Qualification Barriers b) Review of Vocational Qualifications <p>The Head of Higher Education joined the meeting to give members an update on the issue of qualification barriers, he highlighted the issues that some students are facing in trying to progress to HE where their qualifications are not accepted. The committee noted the enclosed correspondence and response from Mark Lee and the following points were noted in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee noted that there is no formal guidance provided to advise if qualifications will be accepted, the Sector is unable to directly engage with the Department of Education and this is something DfE would need to act upon.

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad discussion followed on the challenges students face and why some Universities will not accept OCN NI for example. The committee agreed that it is unreasonable to expect students to assume responsibility to check what qualifications will be accepted. • It was noted that there is an ongoing issue around regulation of qualifications, and it would require reexamination of the whole regulatory process. • Members agreed that a more specific response should be sent back to Mark Lee to try and ensure the issues are addressed head on as the previous letter did not answer the query. <p>Action: The committee agreed that accountability on this matter should be pushed back to the Department and a letter with pointed questions that may receive a more cohesive response</p>
7.	<p>FE Sector response: Opportunities and Constraints Impacting sector contribution to 10X Economy and Skills for a 10X Economy August 2022</p> <p>The Director of Strategic, Planning, Quality and Support asked members to note the enclosed response and advised that there has been further response received from the Department.</p>
8.	<p>College Development Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) College Development Plan commission note b) Draft College Development Plan 22/23 <p>The Director of SPQS advised members that the recent committee that the commissioning note had been very prescriptive, and a draft copy of the CDP has been submitted, with some narrative around the budget.</p> <p>The Principal highlighted that the Chief Finance Officer had only received the planning allocation last week, up until then the pressure of the budget was £3.1m and it is now just over £1m. He informed members that the CFO is still seeking clarity over some of the figures and therefore the College is unable to finalize the CDP financial planning.</p> <p>The Principal asked members to note the Department had requested the CDP was submitted in a new format, the Director of SQPS had commented on this on behalf of the Sector working group with a recommendation that the CDP should align to the Programme for Government and have an outcome-based accountability approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Applications and Enrolments

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

	<p>The Director of C&IS asked members to note the written report that had been circulated. He highlighted that the finance team are providing support in terms of student finance to address any impact the cost of living crisis may have on enrolments, he advised that a significant amount of promotion had been done to ensure that students are retained.</p> <p>In providing an overview of the figures the Director advised that full time enrolments are down by 5% however the College does expect to continually recruit for the Apprentice NI programme through the year. The Sector has seen a significant decline in HE numbers however SERC is performing better than some Colleges.</p> <p>The Chair advised that Audit Committee had discussed the risk of provision at their recent meeting, the absence of a 14-19 Strategy and the lack of action from the Department had been highlighted. He added that Audit committee had requested this committee to add this matter to their agenda with a matter of urgency and this would be discussed under item 9 later.</p> <p>The Director of SPQS advised that the engagement teams have been out to primary schools to try and encourage more parents into Restart classes, there has been a reasonably positive response, but they are reporting issues around the cost-of-living crisis preventing others from enrolling.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Higher Education/Further Education-For Information</p> <p>Members noted that no HERB meeting had taken place and minutes will be presented for review at the next meeting in November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Principal moved onto a presentation that set out the challenges facing the Sector; he reminded members that the review of HE started 2 years ago; ahead of this formal review SERC had provided a detailed analysis of HE in FE and at this time the Skills Barometer had demonstrated that there was a demand for level 4 & 5 skills. •In turn the Department introduced an unwritten policy that foundation degrees were the preferred qualifications, and the FE sector could only partner with certain universities and so there has been a decline in HE across the sector, it is projected by 2026/27 the Sector numbers overall will have decreased by 54%. •The College has held the position for a considerable time that a Distinctive HE in FE Product. E.g.: Advanced Technical Competency based Level 4, 5 and 6 HE in FE that meet the needs of the NI economy in a timely and flexible way and is awarded by a Professional and Technical NI Awarding Organisation. •The Principal advised that the latest paper of the Review does not set out clear recommendations.

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
 held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
 Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

	<p>In a detailed and broad discussion, the Chair summarized that the discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a committee the decline of HE in FE needs to be escalated to the full Governing Body 2. There is strategic imperative that needs to be articulated amongst the Sector and employers 3. The Sector needs to influence employers with narrative to make our voice heard 4. There needs to be a spark triggered to force the various stakeholders to come together <p>The following formal actions were agreed as first step:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Action: The committee agreed that Mr. Huddleston would use his position in the Skills Council as a vehicle to articulate this issue to the Department as quickly as possible</p> <p>Action: The committee agreed to further discuss the decline of HE at the Chair’s Working Group meeting with a view that a smaller working group may need to be established to ensure the GB has complete oversight of the developments</p> </div>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Items for Information:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Report</p> <p>Members were asked to note the report that had been circulated.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Policies for Review/Approval:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Charity and Fundraising Policy</p> <p>The Director of SPQS presented the policy for review, members made some suggested amendments to ensure that the policy is completely transparent on its purpose.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Agreed: Subject to the minor grammar amendments being made the committee approved the Charity and Fundraising Policy and recommended it for adoption by the Governing Body</p> <p>Proposer: Gareth Hetherington</p> <p>Seconder: John Mackell</p> </div> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) Higher Education Admissions Policy</p>

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
 held on Tuesday 20th September at 17:30, in Meeting Room, D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via
 Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

	<p>The Secretary advised that this policy had been part of the Open University submission and due to the deadlines, that needed to be met it had been agreed by email and it was presented now so it could be formally recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>Agreed: The committee approved the Higher Education Admissions Policy and recommended it for adoption by the Governing Body Proposer: Gareth Hetherington Seconder: Ken Webb</p> <p align="center">c) Safeguarding and Care Policy</p> <p>The Director of SPQS presented the policy, members were asked to approve the minor amendments.</p> <p>Agreed: The committee approved the Safeguarding and Care Policy and recommended it for adoption to the Governing Body Proposer: Majella Corrigan Seconder: Mark Huddleston</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Body thanked Mr Pollard for his service as Chair of the Committee.</p> <p>The Principal added his thanks on behalf of CMT and added that Mr. Pollard had a great interest in the work of the College which had been appreciated.</p>
	<p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 15th November 2022, at 17:30, venue TBC.</p>

The meeting was concluded at 8.45pm